

CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) A method of vending fasteners to retail consumers, comprising the steps of:

(a) stocking numerous varieties of fasteners at a retail outlet in selected locations, each of said locations identifiable by visible retail location identifiers, wherein said numerous varieties of fasteners are stocked in predetermined containers, each container containing one of the varieties of fasteners and having a visible container identifier for readily identifying the container;

(b) providing consumers with access to merchandising software, said software having computer program instructions configured to cause a computer to provide a user interface for receiving user input, to cause the computer to display fastener pages having icons describing said fasteners and to cause the computer to display the retail location identifiers corresponding to the locations in which said fasteners are stocked, wherein said icons include graphical images of said fasteners and wherein information, said icons, and retail location identifiers and container identifiers are presented on fastener pages organized according to fastener varieties, and wherein said user input determines the display of said pages; and

(c) allowing such consumers public access to said fasteners.

2 - 4. (cancelled)

5. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the fastener pages includes a screen for displaying videos demonstrating the use of at least some of said fasteners.

6. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein step (b) is carried out at said retail outlet, and wherein said user interface includes a touch screen.

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein step (b) is carried out remote from said retail outlet, and wherein said user interface is provided by a personal computer and monitor.

8. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein said software is provided to said consumers on a pre-recorded storage medium.

9. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein said software is provided to said consumers by means of a computer network.

10. (original) The method of claim 9 wherein said software comprises a series of pages capable of being displayed by a network browser.

11 – 12. (cancelled)

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said information includes stock information relating to the availability of said selected type of fastener in said retail establishment.

14. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said information includes the location of said selected type of fastener in two or more retail establishments.

15. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein some of said fastener pages include a link for displaying real-time information relating to the availability of an associated selected type of fastener.

16. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said information includes graphical instructions describing appropriate usage of a selected type of fastener.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said information includes a video demonstrating usage of a selected type of fastener.

18. (withdrawn) A method of selecting a fastener suitable for a particular purpose from a collection of numerous varieties of fasteners comprising:

- (a) identifying an application in which a fastener may be used;
- (b) accessing a collection of pages by using a computer, the collection of pages describing various types of fasteners;
- (c) navigating through the collection of pages to identify a particular fastener suitable for the application, the navigating comprising:
 - (i) accessing an overview main page of said collection of pages, wherein said overview main page illustrates two or more types or groups of fasteners;
 - (ii) selecting a type or group of fastener suitable for the application;
 - (iii) viewing another page of said collection of pages, wherein said other page illustrates additional fasteners within said type or group of fasteners; and
 - (iv) viewing a detail page of said collection of pages, wherein said detail page includes information relating to said particular fastener and to the location of said particular fastener in a retail establishment;
- (d) selecting the particular fastener; and
- (e) obtaining the particular fastener at the location in the retail establishment.

19 - 20. (cancelled)

21. (withdrawn) The method of claim 18 wherein said detail page includes information relating to the availability of said particular fastener in a retail establishment.

22. (withdrawn) The method of claim 21 wherein said information includes real-time stock information about said particular fastener in one or more retail establishments.

23. (withdrawn) The method of claim 18 wherein steps (b) and (c) are performed in the retail establishment.

24. (withdrawn) The method of claim 18 wherein step (b) and (c) are performed in a location remote from said retail establishment.

25. (withdrawn) The method of claim 24, wherein step (e) comprises:
attending at the location of the particular fastener, obtaining one or more of the particular fastener and purchasing the obtained fasteners.

26. (withdrawn) The method of claim 24 wherein steps (b) and (c) are performed using a network browser.

27 – 29. (cancelled)

30. (withdrawn) A computer readable medium having stored thereon computer program instructions, which when executed by a computer, cause a collection of pages to be displayed on a user interface of the computer, said collection of pages comprising:

one or more selection pages for selecting a type of fastener from two or more types of fasteners, wherein each of said selection pages includes one or more icons, each of said icons being associated with one or more associated pages, wherein said associated pages may be selection pages or detail pages; and

one or more detail pages linked to at least one selection page for describing selected types of fasteners, wherein each of said detail pages includes a description of a selected type of fastener, a graphical representation of the type of fastener, a publicly accessible location of the type of fastener in a retail establishment and use information concerning recommended use of the type of fastener;

wherein said collection of pages is organized in a tree structure having a selection page at its root node.

31 – 34. (cancelled)

35. (withdrawn) The computer readable medium of claim 30, wherein one or more detail pages include information concerning the availability of said type of fastener in one or more retail establishments.

36. (withdrawn) The computer readable medium of claim 30, wherein one or more detail pages include a link for displaying real time stock information for said type of fastener, wherein said real time stock information is located in a database.

37. (withdrawn) The computer readable medium of claim 36, wherein said database is stored on a remote data medium.

38. (previously presented) A method of vending fasteners to retail consumers, comprising the steps of:

(a) stocking numerous varieties of fasteners at a retail outlet in selected locations, each of said locations identifiable by visible retail location identifiers, wherein said numerous varieties of fasteners are stocked in predetermined containers, each container containing one of the varieties of fasteners and having a visible container identifier for readily identifying the container;

(b) providing at said retail outlet a computer programmed with fastener merchandising software and accessible to said retail consumers, said fastener merchandising software comprising computer program instructions which, when executed by the computer, cause the computer to provide a user interface for receiving user input from said retail consumers and to display fasteners pages having icons of said fasteners and display the retail location identifiers corresponding to the locations in which said fasteners are stocked, wherein said

icons include graphical images of said fasteners and wherein information, said icons, and retail location identifiers and container identifiers are presented on fastener pages organized according to fastener varieties, and wherein said user input determines the display of said pages; and

(c) allowing said retail consumers public access to said fasteners.

39. (cancelled)

40. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising locating the computer in the retail outlet in which said fasteners are stocked.

41. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the retail location identifier comprises a section identifier, the section identifier comprises a code for identifying a group of shelves of the retail establishment at which said fasteners are stocked.

42. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said visible container identifiers are color-coded.

43. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the information includes a graphical representation of one type of stocked fastener and use information concerning recommended use of the fastener type.

44. (previously presented) The method of claim 43, wherein the use information includes a description of recommended use of the fastener type and a graphical representation of recommended use of the fastener type.

45. (withdrawn) The method of claim 18, wherein the information includes a graphical representation of said particular fastener and use information concerning recommended use of the particular fastener.

46. (withdrawn) The method of claim 45, wherein the use information includes a description of recommended use of said particular fastener and a graphical representation of recommended use of said particular fastener.

47. (withdrawn) The method of claim 18, wherein the location of the particular fastener is indicated by a readily identifiable visible container identifier displayed on said detail page and at the location in the retail establishment.

48. (withdrawn) The computer readable medium of claim 30, wherein the use information includes a description of recommended use of the fastener type and a graphical representation of recommended use of the fastener type.

49. (withdrawn) The computer readable medium of claim 30, wherein the publicly accessible location is indicated on each of said detail pages by a retail location identifier and by a visible container identifier identifying a container in which the type of fastener is stocked.

50. (withdrawn) A method of locating a particular fastener substantially similar to a sample fastener, the particular fastener being stocked among various types of fasteners in a retail location, the method comprising:

- a) accessing a collection of pages using a computer, the collection of pages describing various types of fasteners;
- b) navigating through the collection of pages and selecting a type of fastener from the various types of fasteners;
- c) comparing a characteristic of the sample fastener with a fastener displayed on a page;
- d) selecting a next page to be displayed based on the result of the comparison in step c);
- e) repeating steps c) and d) one or more times and progressively selecting a type of fastener more closely resembling the sample fastener; and

f) selecting the fastener displayed on the next page as the particular fastener when the displayed fastener most closely resembles the sample fastener.

51. (withdrawn) The method of claim 50, further comprising the steps of:

(g) determining a location of the particular fastener in the retail location from location information on the next page, the location information comprising a visible container identifier identifying a container in which the particular fastener is stocked; and
(i) attending at the location and obtaining the particular fastener.

52. (withdrawn) A fastener selection system for a retail establishment, the system comprising:

a computer located in the retail establishment, the computer having a user interface for displaying information and for receiving user input and computer program instructions stored on the computer which, when executed by the computer cause the computer to display one of a collection of fastener pages on the user interface in response to the user input, the collection of fastener pages including one or more selection pages and one or more detail pages, wherein the one or more selection pages include icons for selecting one or more types of fasteners, wherein each detail page includes information describing a selected type of fastener and a retail location of the selected type of fastener in the retail establishment, the retail location including a visible container identifier and indicating a section code;

shelves located in the retail establishment, the shelves being identified by the section code; and

a plurality of types of fasteners stocked on the shelves in predetermined containers corresponding to the visible container identifiers so that each type of fastener is located on a shelf according to the retail location described in the information of the detail page corresponding to the type of fastener, each type of fastener being located on one or more shelves identified by the section code

corresponding to the type of fastener and identifiable in such location by a respective visible container identifier.

53. (withdrawn) The system of claim 52, wherein the information of each detail page includes a graphical representation of the selected type of fastener, a description of recommended use of the selected type of fastener and a graphical representation of a recommended use of the selected type of fastener.